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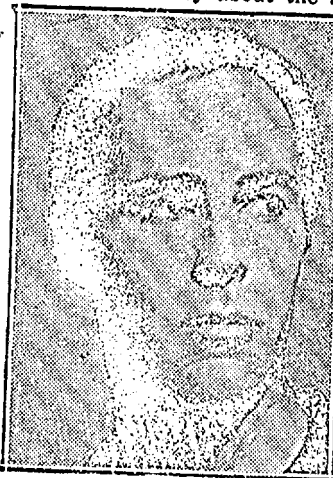
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"Trial of Lee H. Oswald" Is Static Drama

By JOHN CHAPMAN

(Reprinted from yesterday's Times edition)

The first half of "The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald," which opened last evening at the ANTA Theater, is a cleverly illustrated imaginatively mounted courtroom documentary about the as-



Peter Masterson

assassination of President Kennedy—with Lee Oswald still alive and on trial.

The second half is largely Oswald's testimony in his own defense. According to him, in the play, a couple of other guys, both unidentifiable, did the job. The audience, as a jury, is left to its own verdict.

My verdict is that it is a suspenseless play. The authors, Abram Ducovny and Leon Freedman, have supposed that Jack Ruby's shot at Oswald didn't kill him, and now he is on trial.

Call for Perry

The authors could have called on Erle Stanley Gardner and his friends, Perry Mason and Della Street, to put some zip into the proceedings.

Peter Masterson, like the audience, has to sit quietly and listen during the first half. Then, when he takes the stand, he speaks quietly and urgently in his own behalf. The plotters, who may have been Cuban, even had an assassin who looked and dressed like Oswald. And two rifles were used. And Oswald shot the policeman because he was afraid the officer was going to kill him.

Clifton James, Ralph Waite and Dan Priest play prosecutor, defender and judge in regulation style and words. The physical part of the production, designed by Robin Wagner, is the best part of the evening.

CPYRGHT

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